



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

(Notes, Queries, &c.)

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

Communications, &c., not noticed in our present number will receive attention when space permits.

NURSES AND THEIR MANNERS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—I am glad to find that one of your correspondents has taken up the subject of Nurses and their manners, for it is certainly one of great importance. The old adage which tells us that "Manners makyth man," applies, I think, to woman, whatever her position, with still greater force. But in the position of a Nurse more, perhaps, than in any other is the influence of good manners felt and appreciated. The advantages in the matter of birth and education possessed by the lady Nurse ought, no doubt, to give her an immense superiority in this and other respects over her humbler sister; but when put to the test of the sick room this superiority is often found to be more apparent than real. There is greater pretension, no doubt, but is there more thorough performance of the duty to be done? *Voilà la question.* For in my opinion, pretension without performance, airs of superiority without a thorough knowledge of the work to be done and energy to do it, are a delusion and a snare.

A friend of mine, whom I once consulted about engaging a Nurse, advised me not to try a lady Nurse, "For," said she, "the lady Nurse is often no lady, and no Nurse." Be that as it may, it certainly is a fact, Sir, that a woman may be a "lady" without being a *gentle woman*. To be a gentlewoman is to be a woman of culture in heart and mind, and I fear that up to now the system of education thought good enough for our young ladies has not tended to produce

"The perfect woman, nobly plann'd
To charm, to comfort, and command."

Nay, I am by no means sure that the less showy but often more serious and thorough education, as far as it goes, provided at present for our industrial classes, does not afford a better training for a woman, so far as her duties as Nurse, wife, and mother are concerned, than that which has hitherto been deemed sufficient for a lady. There are, however, I am glad to say, signs of the dawn of a better day in this respect; and our English ladies, like their German sisters, are beginning to take up *seriously*, not only Nursing, but also such subjects as cooking and household management. And who knows but that the day may soon come when a lady's education will be considered defective—as, indeed, it ought to be—until she has been thoroughly grounded in these most useful branches of knowledge? Certain it is that, so far as the duties of life are concerned, personal usefulness and personal worth are—or ought to be—the only test of merit, and that these are generally accompanied by true dignity and refinement and simplicity of manners. In mere pretension these qualities are wanting, for pretension without knowledge or ability is simply ridiculous, and in no position is this more apparent than in that of a Nurse.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,
PATERFAMILIAS.

NURSES AND FLOWERS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Dear Sir,—As one deeply interested in and closely connected for years with the Nursing world, I beg to offer you my opinion, and ask your insertion of the following in the valuable columns of the *Nursing Record*. About four weeks ago Her Excellency the Countess of Zetland, with her usual thoughtfulness for the happiness of those around her, invited the Nurses of the leading Dublin Hospitals to an "at home" at the Viceregal Lodge, during the afternoon of which boating and many other amusements were provided for the guests. One or two Nurses belonging to a well-known Dublin Hospital appeared in uniform, and bonnets (uniform ones), but in which had been placed (I presume for adornment) some pink roses! As officers of Her Majesty's services are liable to severe reprimands from their commanding officers for any deviation from the "regulation" uniform, do you not agree with me that Lady Superintendents of Hospitals are, and should be at all times, responsible that the Nursing staff of their respective institutions appear in "strict regulation" uniform, approved of and sanctioned by the Board of Governors? I heard many Nurses resenting the Nurses of the Hospital I mean (although I will not mention it here in public print), as bringing uniform into disrepute, it being admissible by artificial flowers and coral pointed bonnet pins to see a neat, becoming, quiet dress rendered quite the reverse. As an outsider I could mention two or three Hospitals in Dublin in which the outdoor uniform is never made conspicuous by such infringements, and I may add that the Lady Superintendents of two of the Hospitals named are members of the B.N.A., and trained in St. Bartholomew's Hospital.—Believe me, faithfully yours,
A NURSES' FRIEND.

[We are so fond of flowers, and at the same time such great admirers and supporters ourselves of everything that is professional and judicious, that we feel we ought to invite the opinions of our many kind readers upon the above, which we hope they will give.—ED.]

PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—It seems to me that the ideal of what constitutes true politeness is continually changing, or rather, let me say, the modes of showing politeness are continually changing, for the principle remains the same at all times and in all places. So there constantly arises a necessity for the revision of old rules, and for setting forth the accepted "code of manners" for the present time. And I would cordially endorse the opinion of a French writer that "True philosophy respects forms as much as pride despises them. We require a discipline for our conduct, just as we require an order for our ideas."

Some time ago I had occasion to undertake the duty of making a careful synopsis and inspection of the subject aforesaid in relation to Doctors and Nurses, in view of which I cannot accept the version of your kind correspondent, "A. Crook," without a protest, whose remarks, by the way, strongly remind one of those burning words of Shakspeare's—viz., "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves." Are we *never* to listen to the grand finale of this darling and trite "old, old story"?

In passing, let me ask you, Mr. Editor, if our Doctors are, humanly speaking, faultless on this point? If not, why so much ado about nothing? I fear it is as fully possible to find as many bad "masters and teachers" as bad servants and pupils. "Physician, heal thyself," and *Palman qui meruit ferat*.

True it is that the character and conduct of some of our Nurses in the past might have been betimes far more dutiful, courteous and satisfactory all round; but might not the self-same thing have been justly said of too many of our Doctors? Quite true. I will not name for the sake of the living; I

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)